

Iceland to test airport passengers for coronavirus

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Iceland, which has successfully contained the new coronavirus and conducted more tests per capita than any other country, said Tuesday it plans to offer arriving travellers a COVID-19 test to avoid a 14-day quarantine.

The vast island in the North Atlantic has confirmed 1,801 cases of the illness and 10 deaths. Only three cases have been confirmed in May.

The government said it would be offering tests to travellers landing at Keflavik airport—the country's only international airport—as of June 15 at the latest, with the government initially paying the cost of the tests.

It said it was still working out the exact details, but travellers would later be asked to repay the cost of the test.

Under the scheme, once the traveller has submitted their test sample, they would be allowed to proceed to their hotel or home. If their test result available later that day is positive, they will be quarantined for at least 14 days.

Travellers who provide a medical document proving they are free of the coronavirus infection will not need to take a test.

Iceland has carried out tests on 54,791 people so far, or more than 15 percent of its 364,000-strong population.

Travellers will also be required to download and use an official tracing app already in use by 40 percent of the population in Iceland, the government said.

Iceland's borders have remained open to other Schengen countries throughout the pandemic.

But quarantine measures for all international arrivals have been in place in Iceland since April 24, and all Icelandic nationals and all residents arriving from high-risk areas have been required to quarantine for two weeks since late January.

The government said that if the airport screening proves successful, it will consider similar arrangements at its other border entry points. Iceland has ferry routes connecting it to Denmark and the Faroe Islands.

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